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INDEX:

- (1) Debate: Is US beef safe? - part 2
- (2) GSDF shifting southwest; North Korea, China now hypothetical enemies with Soviet collapse
- (3) Editorial: Toughening penalties is not sufficient in regulating golden parachutes
- (4) Opinion column -- Yasukuni and Class-A war criminals: How do we read the "heart" of Emperor Showa (Hirohito)?
- (5) Editorial: 2006 LDP presidential race: Candidates must aim at rebuilding Asia policy
- (6) Bush and Koizumi -- the fate of the strengthened alliance (Part 1): Japan-US security cooperation to cover the entire world, beyond regional bounds of the Far East

ARTICLES:

- (1) Debate: Is US beef safe? - part 2

MAINICHI (Page 3) (Full)
July 31, 2006

Kazuya Yamanouchi, professor emeritus at Tokyo University: Risk awareness is insufficient; Only measure to prevent BSE is blanket cattle testing

For a start, I would like to review a report on risk evaluation of US and Canadian-produced beef issued by the Food Safety Commission. The first conclusion reached by the panel was that from a scientific viewpoint, it is difficult to determine that the potential risk of US beef is equal to that of domestic products. The report, then, added that if export conditions are observed, differences in potential risks between US and domestic beef would be very small. It is difficult to understand this conclusion. However, our report did not declare that the panel had guaranteed the safety of US beef with these conclusions.

The government has made a comprehensive judgment, based on the latter conclusion, and decided to resume US beef imports. That is fair enough. However, it failed to provide an explanation as to how it has surmounted the former conclusion or whether it has just ignored it. The inclusion of vertebral columns in a shipment was discovered this January. It was an unexpected, rudimentary blunder and made one feel that there was a structural flaw in the US' inspection system. That is why it is only natural that consumers are harboring anxieties about the safety of US beef.

The US meat industry is built upon a thorough cost-cutting system. The labor force has been reduced through a belt-conveyer-assisted mass production system. A smallest possible number of inspectors check products, mainly only on paper. This production system does not allow on-the-spot inspection physically.

The US' BSE inspection system is also poor. Since the number of cattle subject to inspection is extremely small, it is not possible to estimate the situation of BSE infection. The US plans to further curtail its cattle inspection. In the US, it is allowed to feed pigs and chickens on meat-and-bone meals. Therefore, there is concern

TOKYO 00004305 002 OF 010

that this could spread BSE infection.

The US introduced a belt-conveyer system early in the 20th century, which has given rise to a system of attaching importance to cutting labor resources rather than securing food hygiene. That is to say, its present food processing system is traditional. That is why there was a statement, which quoted traffic accidents in claiming the safety of US beef. I must say that the BSE risk awareness in the US is woefully insufficient.

If the US wants to say, "Now, our beef is all right," it should carry out blanket cattle inspections. Since our target is agents that pose a serious crisis for food safety, it is most rational to conduct blanket cattle testing, thereby guaranteeing safety and peace of mind.

Even if US beef is imported to Japan, I will not eat it. People may say that there is almost no possibility of eating the BSE-causing agents, but there is no guarantee about the safety of US beef, either.

Kazuya Yamanouchi: Graduated from the Tokyo University Agriculture Department. Served as a member of the Food Safety Commission Prion Experts Council from July 2003 through March 2006. 75 years old.

(2) GSDF shifting southwest; North Korea, China now hypothetical enemies with Soviet collapse

SANKEI (Page 4) (Full)
July 31, 2006

The Ground Self-Defense Force is shifting the mainstay of its troops from Japan's northern districts to its southwestern districts. The GSDF, in its northern defenses, used to regard the now-defunct Soviet Union as a hypothetical enemy. Today, the GSDF is building up its southwestern defenses against North Korea's potential missile attacks and China's infiltration into the East China Sea. The GSDF's 7th Division-Japan's only panzer corps headquartered in the city of Chitose on Japan's northernmost main island of Hokkaido-has strengthened its northern defenses. In June, however, the GSDF's Western Infantry Regiment, organized in 2002 and based in the city of Sasebo, Nagasaki Prefecture, unveiled its seaborne landing drill

of GSDF rangers trained by the US Marine Corps. Their amphibious training gave an imprint of Japan's preparedness for the threats surrounding Japan. What was the aim of that seaborne landing practice? The Sankei Shimbun reports on the GSDF that is undergoing a sea change.

On the afternoon of June 6, an amphibious vessel of the Maritime Self-Defense Force was anchored at sea two kilometers off the GSDF's Aiura garrison in the city of Sasebo. Five rubber dinghies, launched from the MSDF transport, began to head for the shore.

In the dinghies were armed GSDF members from the Western Infantry Regiment. Eight stalwarts wearing flippers slid into the sea when their boats reached a point 300 meters off the shore. They swam sidestroke toward the beach while carrying rifles on their shoulders.

The scene is from a seaborne landing drill for GSDF members with a scenario of recapturing an enemy-occupied island of Japan. This kind of training was disclosed in Japan for the first time. In January this year, a group of GSDF members was sent from the Western

TOKYO 00004305 003 OF 010

Infantry Regiment to the United States for joint field training exercises with US Marine Corps troops at US military facilities, including the US Navy's Coronado base in San Diego, California. The GSDF's seaborne landing drill that day was carried out with about 100 GSDF members from other bases in Japan. They experienced field training exercises like those conducted in California, and their landing practice was also opened to the media.

The GSDF troops swam as if sliding through the water. That is why they are called swimming scouts. They are to guide main troops in boats at night.

After landing an island, GSDF troops establish a beachhead and mop up enemy troops near the landing point. In addition, they scout enemy positions. After making a surprise attack, they leave the shore. Depending on circumstances, they choose to land on a rocky place or a sandy beach.

"We carry out this landing operation under the cloak of darkness," a GSDF officer explained. The officer added, "The purpose of this training is to practice landing and leaving under cover."

The Western Infantry Regiment is the first special unit tasked with the defense and security of about 2,500 remote islands, including about 200 inhabited islands, in the districts of Kyushu and Okinawa.

What situation is anticipated in an undercover landing drill? "This training exercise has nothing to do with actual warfare," a GSDF training officer said. "We just show our training we conducted in the United States," the officer added with inarticulate words. GSDF Western District Army Deputy Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Koichiro Bansho, who commanded the training troops, explained that the landing drill was not intended to deal with any specific country or area. However, Bansho clearly said the drill was for the GSDF to cope with enemy incursions on Japan's outlying islands. In other words, the GSDF will mobilize troops in order to recapture Japan's southwestern islands, including the Senkaku isles, if these islands were invaded.

On May 28, Hokkaido's Higashichitose range for the GSDF was in a cold rain with strong crosswinds blowing when 76 armored vehicles, including M-90 tanks, were thundering along there. It was a scene from the 7th Division's combat training.

"The 7th Division is the ace unit to defend Japan's northern districts as the only armored division that was on the front of East-West confrontation," said Lt. Gen. Yutaka Shoda, who commands the 7th Division. However, the Cold War is over. Nowadays, Japan is less likely to come under attack from airborne or seaborne landing enemy troops in its northern districts. As it stands, there are now arguments insisting on the necessity of reviewing the heavily armored division currently made up of tanks and heavy guns.

Meanwhile, GSDF Chief of Staff Tsutomu Mori once commanded the 7th Division. "I know some people are saying we don't need tanks any more," Mori said. "But," Mori added, "we need heavily armed forces at a certain level." With this, Mori defended the 7th Division while playing up its *raison d'etre*. However, the GSDF is now shifting its troop deployment from the north to the south at a high pitch.

On July 11, the GSDF started a southward-bound redeployment drill to move GSDF troops from Hokkaido and Tohoku to the Kanto districts,

TOKYO 00004305 004 OF 010

using MSDF vessels and Air Self-Defense Force transport planes. Since 1977, the GSDF has carried out northward-bound redeployment to move its troops from Honshu to Hokkaido. Last year, however, the GSDF began southward-bound redeployment in order to push ahead with flexible deployment to meet the Korean Peninsula situation and China's moves.

The 7th Division and the Western Infantry Regiment are contrasting in their training exercises-when it comes to their mobility, hardware, and scale. The two GSDF units are steadily stepping up their readiness for changes arising in the security environment and threats-or hypothetical enemies-surrounding Japan.

(3) Editorial: Toughening penalties is not sufficient in regulating golden parachutes

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 5) (Full)
July 31, 2006

Toughening regulations on the practice of *amakudari* -- or national government employees retiring to cushy positions in companies they previously used to regulate -- is now under consideration. The cardinal feature of the plan to stop such golden parachute practices is the introduction of restrictions on the conduct of civil servants under which both former and incumbent government employees would be punished in the event of influence peddling or other irregularities. The decision to toughen such penalties deserves high praise, but that alone, we think, is insufficient.

Restricting the practice of *amakudari* and making a substantial cut in the authorized number of government employees form an essential element in the plan to reform the public servant system. The government's Administrative Reform Promotion Headquarters plans to ready a package of measures by early September just before Prime Minister Koizumi steps down.

The main targets of the tougher regulations are Type-I public servants, that is to say, career-track bureaucrats. Regulations now under consideration include: (1) rooting out *amakudari* as the conventional method of installing retired civil servants in high posts at private companies or public corporations through the use of good offices; (2) introduction of a dual career-ladder system that allows government employees to work until the mandatory retirement age; and (3) proactive promotion of personnel exchanges between the bureaucracy and the private sector.

Existing restrictions on *amakudari* by national government employees include a ban on former bureaucrats finding a new private-sector job for two years after retirement, and restrictions on the number of officials that can be dispatched to public interest corporations as executives.

Under the new plan, those regulations will be strictly implemented. Restrictions on the conduct of civil servants will also be adopted. These rules are intended to ban former government officials who went onto jobs at private companies from working on incumbent bureaucrats for the purpose of obtaining licenses, approvals and contracts. Violations of these regulations are subject to punishment. In particular, career-track officials are likely to be cautious about contacting retired officials, fearing such would likely affect their promotions.

A plan is being mulled to regulate the conduct of civil servants

under the National Civil Service Law, a revised National Public Official Moral Law or a new law to be created anew.

The regulation of conduct of civil servants will be indeed effective in stopping retired government officials from acting as influence peddlers. However, under this regulation, it is not possible to punish those other than government employees when they take improper actions. Private companies employ retired government employees in the hope of their exercising influence. It is also necessary to consider extending the duration of the ban on the reemployment of former government employees after retirement as well as strengthen regulations on amakudari.

It is important to abolish the practice of encouraging senior officials to take early retirements. Private companies, public utility corporations and government-affiliated organizations employ sidetracked government officials, serving as settings for the emergence of collusive ties, which lead to bid-rigging.

The Administrative Reform Promotion Headquarters is now looking into the possibility of establishing a personnel system that enables government employees to work until the mandatory retiring age. Under this system, side-tracked senior officials would be given a positions as experts on research, education or other areas. This is reasonable, but all government agencies need to make sure that they fully utilize the new system.

Exchanges between the bureaucracy and the private sector are also important. If fledgling bureaucrats have an experience of working at private companies, it would help them find the right job well before retirement. This should not be for the sake of bureaucrats securing after-retirement jobs well in advance.

There is criticism that administrative reform and setting of amakudari regulations has been left up to the bureaucracy to manage. It is not acceptable if strengthened regulations fail to produce effects and instead benefit bureaucratic interests. We would like the next administration to make sure that it displays strong leadership as well as establish a monitoring system.

(4) Opinion column -- Yasukuni and Class-A war criminals: How do we read the "heart" of Emperor Showa (Hirohito)?

ASAHI (Page 9) (Abridged)
July 31, 2006

Hirofumi Wakamiya, managing editor of the Asahi Shimbun

When I had a discussion with students at Tsinghua University in Beijing in May 2005, a certain student asked me in an accusing tone: "Prime Minister Koizumi repeatedly visits to Yasukuni Shrine. Does he offer a prayer for thanks to Japan's past militarist leaders who treated Chinese inhumanely?"

This question stunned me. I told the student, "No." But the students appeared unconvinced. So I added: "Aside from the prime minister, the Emperor has never visited the shrine even once since the Class-A war criminals were enshrined there together with the war dead. Do you know this fact?"

At that moment, applause broke out. Of the 200 students there, only a dozen clapped, but that was enough to completely change the mood in that classroom. I felt then as if the trouble caused by the prime

minister was being resolved by the Emperor.

In late July, a memo of former Imperial Household Agency Grand Steward Asahiko Tomita was revealed in which Emperor Showa was quoted as expressing displeasure at the enshrinement of the Class-A war criminals at Yasukuni Shrine. In the memo, the Emperor stated, "From that time on, I have stopped visiting the shrine. That is how my heart feels." The memo clarified the reason why the Emperor had

stopped visiting the shrine.

Tomita might have informed the late former Chief Cabinet Secretary Masaharu Gotoda this anecdote, because I heard of a similar story from him in the latter years of his life.

The disclosed memo brought a new question to my mind: Why did Emperor Showa respond so severely to the enshrinement of the Class-A war criminals at Yasukuni?

The Tokyo Tribunal, which put on trial and sentenced the Class-A war criminals, was closely related to the Emperor, having been given immunity from prosecution of any war responsibility. There was even a record that Emperor Showa expressed gratitude for the Tokyo Trials to General Douglas MacArthur when he left Japan. So some may assume that there is no wonder that Emperor Showa disliked the enshrinement of the Class-A war criminals at Yasukuni Shrine, but the Emperor's attitude was not at all related to his having saved himself.

That is because what the acceptance of the Tokyo Trial's judgment ensured were not only the continuation of the emperor system but also the fresh start of a postwar Japan. The Emperor was even more aware than anyone else that under the new Constitution, he was required to play a new role to rebuild Japan.

The Emperor should have various feelings toward each individual war criminal executed, but those would be personal. If the spirits of soldiers who were sent to battlefields at the state's order and lost lives honored at the shrine together with those who led the war, Japan's regret over the war as the Emperor keenly expressed and Japan's resolution to rebuild itself would be blurred. Following this way of thinking, I can easily understand why the Emperor stopped visiting the shrine. Supposedly, it is not each Class-A war criminal but the enshrinement itself of the Class-A war criminals at Yasukuni Shrine that the Emperor could not accept.

Prime Minister Koizumi will definitely be torn this year between visiting the shrine on Aug. 15 and staying home. Koizumi brushed aside the impact of the recently revealed memo by Tomita, commenting, "This is the matter of each person's feeling. It is a matter of the heart," but I wonder if those are the correct words to say.

Today, the Emperor does not have absolute power, and consequently the Emperor and the prime minister would have separate feelings. But the Emperor is the symbol of the unity of the people and is most responsible for offering respect to the war dead in view of past circumstances. He is a public figure whose words and behavior draw public attention. The Emperor has not visited the shrine since that enshrinement. Is there anybody who can overtly disregard such behavior by the Emperor?

The current Emperor (Akihito) also is in a difficult position. Considering his responsibility to console the souls of the war dead, he has visited Okinawa and Saipan, but he avoids Yasukuni Shrine.

TOKYO 00004305 007 OF 010

Presumably, Emperor Akihito has taken over the "heart" of Emperor Showa.

The prime minister insists on going in accord with his own "heart", but shouldn't he consider the "heart" of the Emperor, too? Setting aside place for the Emperor -- the symbol of the unity of the people -- to visit to pay homage to the war dead is essential. Securing such a place is a task for politicians. This is not taken to mean that the Emperor be used for political purposes.

A week or so ago, former Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda announced his intention not to run in the LDP presidential race. His announcement has helped Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe to come closer to reach the seat of the prime minister. Recently, Abe as chief cabinet secretary, led the move for adoption of a resolution by the United Nations denouncing North Korea for its recent missile launches. This behavior may be seen as if a prelude to his reaching the seat of power soon. But if he wants to create international cooperation under the slogan of freedom and democracy, he should not

create more controversy over Yasukuni Shrine, which is far from an abstract symbol, and destroy that international cooperation.

There is a clear difference between Emperor Showa's words found in the memo about Yasukuni and China's criticism of Japanese leaders' visits to Yasukuni. The memo seems to bring with it a good chance for both Koizumi and Abe to rethink the Yasukuni issue.

(5) Editorial: 2006 LDP presidential race: Candidates must aim at rebuilding Asia policy

NIHON KEIZAI (Page 2) (Full)
July 31, 2006

Undeniably, Japan's strained relations with China and South Korea will become one of the negative legacies left behind by the Koizumi administration. A relationship that does not allow the leaders of Japan and China to hold summit talks seems quite unusual internationally, although Japan alone is not the blame. Those candidates aiming to run in the race to become the next prime minister must spell out ways to rebuild relations with other Asian countries. The entire world and not just a domestic audience in Japan will be watching intently what transpires next.

Paying homage at Yasukuni Shrine must be avoided

In discussing Japan's foreign policy, people tend to fall in the meaningless argument on whether to put priority on Asia or the United States. Japan, an international player, cannot choose between Asia and the US. The reason is clear in national security. If tensions arise in North Korea or over the Taiwan Strait, Japan would be forced to get involved there directly. The presence of the United States based on the Japan-US alliance has been preventing just that. Measures for China are also vital.

There is no question that Japan should continue with the Koizumi administration's policy course of attaching importance to the Japan-US alliance, while rebuilding its policy toward Asia. The close relationship between the United States and Japan, the world's largest and second-largest economies, is a prerequisite for global economic activities, contributing to the stability of the world. Asia is also important in view of the rise of China and India.

Establishing a solid relationship with the dynamically growing Asia

TOKYO 00004305 008 OF 010

is an important task for Japan of the early 21st century. It is imperative for Japan to improve relations with China. Beijing has repeatedly rejected Japan-China summit talks because of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's visits to Yasukuni Shrine.

Japan has recently received China's signals expressing its eagerness to improve relations with the next Japanese administration. Lawmakers eager to become the next prime minister must not ignore those signals.

We have repeatedly urged the prime minister to stop visiting Yasukuni Shrine, which enshrines Class-A war criminals along with the war dead. That was not because China thinks his shrine visits are inappropriate. Rather, it was because we think problems lie there when history is viewed from the standpoint of the Japanese people. Although the Yasukuni issue does not fall in the realm of foreign policy, it has great implications internationally. That is why there are a variety of opinions in the Liberal Democratic Party, such as those calling for unenshrining Class-A war criminals from Yasukuni Shrine, reorganizing Yasukuni, building a new facility, and upgrading the Chidorigafuchi National Cemetery.

Japan-China relations are enormous. According to the Chinese Commerce Ministry, trade between the two countries marked a record 184.4 billion dollars in 2005. Despite Japan's concern over Beijing's warning against a bilateral relationship that is cold politically and cool economically in the wake of massive anti-Japan demonstrations, economic exchanges continued to grow in 2005. The Yasukuni issue and economic exchanges are only part of Japan-China relations. Historians think the current relationship between the two

countries is unique.

Both are regional major powers with growing economic interdependence but with no common enemies. One is a democracy and the other is a communism with no shared values. Such an amicable bilateral relationship has rarely existed in the world. Japan and China are required to exercise self-restraint as major powers in the globalized world. Prime ministerial candidates must heed this point.

Japan and China are saddled with mounting issues that require mutual cooperation, such as historical issues besides Yasukuni, China's military buildup, the energy struggle epitomized by the development of gas fields in the East China Sea, and environmental destruction. The two countries have conducted area-specific working-level talks. The lack of summit talks must not prevent working-level talks from making progress.

Japan-US alliance as basis

The year 2007 marks the 35th anniversary of normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and China and the year 2008 the 30th anniversary of the conclusion of the Japan-China Peace and Amity Treaty. With that in mind, those who want to become Prime Minister Koizumi's successor must consider a great agreement stipulating a new Japan-China relationship. During the Reagan-Gorbachev era in the closing days of the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union established area-specific taskforces under summit talks to resolve issues.

Japan and China are not in a cold war. We believe the two countries can accomplish what the US and the Soviet Union achieved during the Cold War era with ease.

TOKYO 00004305 009 OF 010

The new LDP president will be selected by the LDP lawmakers are rank-and-file members who seem more conservative than the general public. Many of them are believed to have severe views toward China, as well. Sooner or later, the general public will also make decisions on the next prime minister through national elections. The expression, "Only Nixon was able to go to Beijing," is occasionally heard in the world of international politics. It means that Nixon was able to visit China because he was conservative.

Koizumi diplomacy has cemented relations with the United States. The next prime minister must find a breakthrough in relations with China. It will be a starting point for Japan's policy toward Asia. Post-Koizumi contenders are expected to come up with innovative ideas.

(6) Bush and Koizumi -- the fate of the strengthened alliance (Part 1): Japan-US security cooperation to cover the entire world, beyond regional bounds of the Far East

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Slightly abridged)
July 31, 2006

Yoichi Toyoda

Receiving a 19-gun salute at a welcoming ceremony held on the South Lawn of the White House on June 29, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi expressed his hopes for his talks with President George W. Bush: "The good personal relationship between the leaders of the two countries is good not only for two of us. As an ally, I'd like to discuss bilateral relations as well as how to tackle various issues around the world."

That was the 13th bilateral summit between Bush and Koizumi. The meeting between the two leaders and a few of their officials lasted for 90 minutes.

Most of the time was devoted to the topic of how to respond to North Korea's missile launches. After the meeting, the two leaders summed up the previous five years of Japan-US ties as the most mature bilateral relationship and released a statement titled "The Japan-US

Alliance of the New Century," which declared global cooperation.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Abe, who has supported Koizumi since his administration came into being, depicts the current Japan-US ties this way: "Bilateral relations are stronger than they were a decade ago or five years ago. The two countries have become equal partners. The United States is now transforming itself as an ally attentive to Japan's views."

Back on Sept. 12, 2002, a Japan-US summit meeting took place in New York. In the meeting, Koizumi began by saying to Bush, who had then assumed a hard-line stance toward attacking Iraq even single-handedly: "I'd like you to behave like a sumo grand champion."

Likening the only superpower US to a sumo grand champion, Koizumi urged Bush to exercise self-restraint in striking without cause.

Unable to understand Koizumi's words, Bush remained silent. One of the officials who was present in the meeting explained: "The Iraq issue won't go like a sumo match." Despite Koizumi's advice, Bush launched a preemptive attack on Iraq on March 20, 2003.

TOKYO 00004305 010 OF 010

Since then, four years have passed. Immediately after North Korea's missile launches in July, Abe met with US Ambassador to Japan Thomas Schieffer, who rushed to the Prime Minister's Official Residence (Kantei), and the two officials analyzed the situation and discussed how to respond.

When the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) dealt with the question of a resolution on North Korea, the US sided with Japan, which called for a sanctions resolution. Although China rejected hinted that it would veto any resolution that imposed sanctions, Japan succeeded in soliciting flexibility from China and finally put the resolution to a vote and got it approved unanimously.

One ranking government official murmured: "This is indeed what is expected of the alliance."

As a factor that enhanced Japan's voice, Abe cited the overseas dispatch of Self-Defense Force (SDF) troops the Koizumi administration has promoted.

Koizumi dispatched Maritime Self-Defense Force troops to the Indian Ocean to refuel US forces engaged in the war on terror in Afghanistan, and after the Iraq war sent Ground and Air Self-Defense Force troops to Iraq for reconstruction assistance.

The Japan-US security arrangement, whose scope had been previously limited to the defense of Japan and the Far East, has now expanded globally under the honeymoon relations between Bush and Koizumi. The Self-Defense Forces' (SDF) activities are becoming integrated with those of the US military, and the overseas dispatch of SDF troops is no longer a surprising event.

Japan has increased its say with regard to the US. In return, Japan is required to join hands with the US to face common enemies. Bilateral relations are being shaped into what the Bush administration has hoped for.

The honeymoon between Bush and Koizumi will come to an end in September, when Koizumi steps down from his post. The Japan-US relationship is viewed as having deepened thanks to the relationship of trust between the two leaders over the past five years. How will this relationship change in the coming years and where will it go? This column will look into the fate of the alliance.

SCHIEFFER